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SPORTS

Girls soccer, volleyball teams head to Needham Saturday for respective Sweet 16, Elite 8 games

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR

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Winchester girls soccer senior captain Ellie Kiernan brings the ball up field during a Division 2 Round of 32 game against Westford Academy at home on Nov. 4. The Red & Black were able to shutout the Ghosts to move on to the Sweet 16 tomorrow (Nov. 9) in Needham. COURTESY PHOTO/GAVIN VALERIANO

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The Winchester High girls soccer team (15-1-3) recently wrapped regular season to get ready for the start of the Division 1 playoffs as the

12th seed overall.

On Oct. 23, coach Michelle Ross' team played its final Middlesex League game this fall on the road at Belmont. The Red & Black battled the Marauders to a scoreless tie. Ross emptied her bench to give the entire varsity roster a chance to play considerable minutes.

"The girls have worked so hard on and off the pitch to make sure we were well-prepared for the season," said the first-year coach. "It is a really unique group that genuinely respects each other, and also enjoys spending time with each other.

"Our team is fortunate to have such a strong town program with amazing coaches, encouraging fans and a supportive high school administration," added Ross.

Three days later, the Winchester girls took on North Andover in a rescheduled Krauss Cup game at Knowlton Field, and the home team was able to shutout the Scarlet Knights, 3-0.

Despite blustery winds, the Red & Black still managed to maintain control of the game, outshooting the visitors, 19-6. They were also credited with nine corner kicks.

"We were able to mix things up by starting players who usually come off the bench," said Ross. "It injected fresh energy into the lineup, which reinforced everyone´s major role on the team."

Sophomore Emma Kiernan opened up the scoring in the first half with a spectacular goal. After taking a well-placed ball from junior Gaby Hermsdorf, Kiernan unleashed a powerful shot from the 25, which found the top left corner of the net.

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Winchester girls soccer senior captain Lila Savage controls the ball during a Round of 32 game against Westford Academy at home on Nov. 4. The Red & Black were able to shutout the Ghosts to move on to the Sweet 16 tomorrow (Nov. 9) in Needham. COURTESY PHOTO/GAVIN VALERIANO

Junior G.G. Fantini netted the final two goals of the game in the s
half. Senior Lila Savage setup her first score with a smart pass that

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delivered the ball from the right side to the center that hit Fantini on the fly.

Fantini then split the defenders, before skillfully placing her shot into the bottom right corner of the net. Her second goal was nothing short of spectacular, and will surely be remembered as one of the best of the season, according to Ross.

“The scoring play began with junior Lilly Ossen switching the field, before finding junior Grace Wilhoite on the right. Grace then connected with senior Ellie Kiernan, who made a precise pass to junior Courtney Fisher, who then sent a waist-high cross to the top of the penalty box, where Fantini volleyed it home into the right side of the net, which left the fans in awe,” the coach further explained.

“This victory capped off the regular season on a high note for us,” added Ross. “We were especially pleased to secure another shutout for the defense, which makes 14 this season. Sophomore Amelia Burke was solid in goal. She commanded the box and directed the play to help preserve the clean sheet throughout the match.”

The Winchester girls have since opened up the state tournament against Westford Academy (10-6-1), the 21st seed, in the Round of 32 at home on Nov. 4, where they blanked the visitors, 2-0. The victory sends them to the Round of 16 against host Needham (14-4-1, fifth seed) on Saturday, Nov. 9, starting at 5 p.m. Needham shutout Lexington (8-9-2, 28th seed) in its Round of 32 game, 4-0.

The Red & Black controlled the tempo of the Westford Academy game. They dominated possession, outshooting the Ghosts, 21-8, and were also credited with 10 corner kicks.

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Senior captain Anya Wickramasinghe opened up the scoring with a spectacular finishing goal in the first half, assisted by senior captain Lila Savage, who played a sweet through ball to her.

Winchester scored the insurance tally with about 10 minutes left in the first half, when sophomore Amelia Holmes crossed the ball into the box from the left side of the pitch, and Fantini finished it off by flicking it past the Westford Academy goalkeeper.

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The home team had a number of second half near misses, including two shots that banged off the crossbar, one by junior Juliet Semmes and another one by her classmate and center-back Gaby Hermsdorf. Semmes also just missed another scoring chance after sending a header just left of the net that was initiated by senior captain Lucca Ventura on a cross.

“We were especially pleased to secure another shutout for the defense, now an impressive 15 on the season,” said Ross. “Senior Amelia Corvi was strong in goal, and also commanded the box quite well, while directing the play to help preserve the clean sheet throughout the match with help from backs Sara Stewart, Amanda Mitchell, Gaby Hermsdorf, Grace Wilhoite, Ellie Kiernan and Leila Flummerfelt.”

Volleyball

The Winchester High volleyball team (20-2) completed the regular season recently with three more wins against the likes of Reading (3-0 on Senior Night, Oct. 22), Belmont (3-0, Oct. 24) and host Andover (3-2, Oct. 25).

The Red & Black then began the Division 1 postseason as the 13th
against that same Andover squad (13-8, 20th seed) on Nov. 1 at ho

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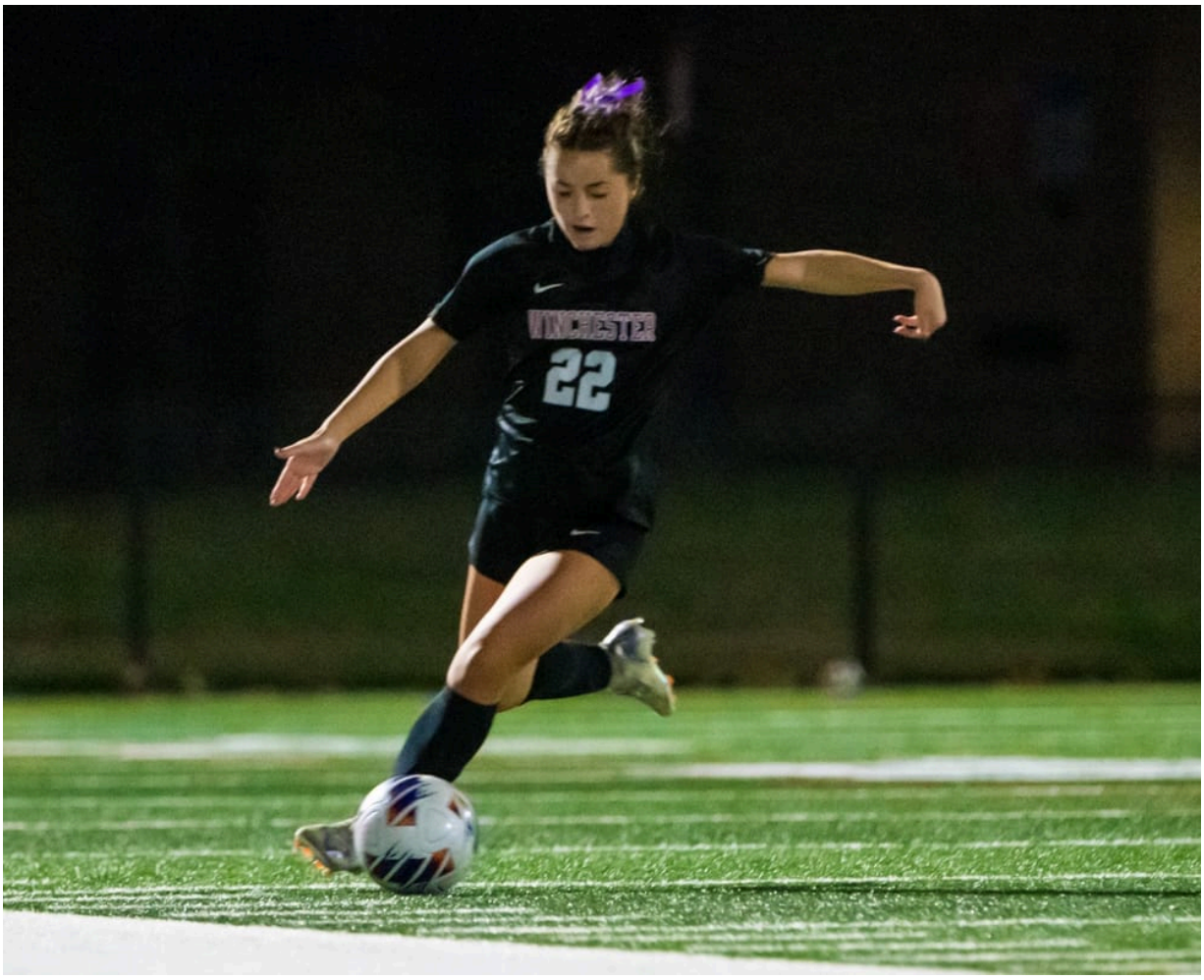
they defeated them once again, this time by a 3-1 count in a Round of 32 encounter.

Prior to those matches, coach John Fleming's squad edged Lexington on Oct. 17, 3-2.

"The win over Lexington was a special one," said Fleming. "First of all, it was our 15th annual Serve for the Cure match that raised funds for the Winchester Hospital Breast Care Center. And once the match began, we were also able to avenge one of our two losses this year, which guaranteed us at least a share of the Middlesex League title."



Winchester girls soccer junior defender Amanda Mitchell gets ready to clear the ball during a Round of 32 game against Westford Academy at home on Nov. 4. The Red & Black were able to shutout the Ghosts to move on to the Sweet 16 tomorrow (Nov. 9) in Needham. COURTESY PHOTO/GAVIN VALERIANO

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Winchester then wrapped it up all by themselves against aforementioned Reading.

Seniors Margo Kaduson (libero) and Helen Zhou (outside hitter) are this year's team captains. Sophomore outside hitter Hazel Lovins (69) and Kaduson (66) were the leaders in aces, as of Oct. 22. Lovins also went to the head of the class in kills with 227.

Zhou was next in line with 160, followed by junior Johanna Melhorn with 106, who also had 38 blocks to lead the way in that category. Sophomore setter Defne Mergen was No. 1 in assists with 491 going into that Reading match. Kaduson was first in digs with 175.

Fleming says the win over non-league visiting Barnstable back on Sept. 27 was "huge," because they were ranked third in the state at the time, and have historically been considered the best high school program.

He also mentioned the 3-1 win over Melrose on Sept. 11 as a seminal moment this season, because the Red Hawks have been the team to beat throughout the past two decades in the Middlesex League.

"Anytime you can get a win versus either program, you are likely having a very good season," the Winchester coach explained.

The Winchester girls are now three away from the Division 1 state championship.

After defeating aforementioned Andover in the Round of 32, the Red & Black then upset Attleboro (19-2), the fourth seed, in the Sweet 16, 3-1 to advance to the Elite 8 game versus host Needham (16-5, fifth seed) tomorrow (Nov. 9), beginning at 2 p.m.

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SPORTS

Winchester boys basketball heads to Bridgewater-Raynham for Sweet 16 game after beating Lexington in postseason opener

It was the third meeting this year between Middlesex League boys basketball rivals Lexington (16-5, 11th seed) and Winchester (17-4, 22nd seed). They split the first two during the regular season, thus making this Round of 32 postseason matchup the impromptu rubber game of this year's series, with the

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SPORTS

Winchester wrestling enjoys Top 10 finish at state divisional meet; senior captains move on to All-States

After the Winchester High qualified wrestlers competed hard over two days last weekend (Feb. 20, 21) in the State Division 1 Meet at North Andover High School, Mother Nature gave them a break to rest and recuperate with Monday's blizzard that resulted in two days off from school. There

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Winchester boys hockey advances to the Sweet 16 after beating Wachusett in the tournament opener

The Winchester High boys hockey team (12-9-2), the 17th seed, edged the 16th-seeded Wachusett Regional Mountaineers (18-2-1), 5-4 in a Round of 32 Division 1 state tournament game at Westborough's Northstar Ice Arena on Feb. 25. The Red & Black will now take on top seed Catholic Memorial (18-2-1)

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February 27, 2026

SPORTS

With postseason starting Friday night, WHS boys hoop seniors English, Sarpong, Burbine join Middlesex League elite

The Winchester High boys basketball team, the 22nd seed, will take on Middlesex League rival Lexington, the 11th seed, to begin the Division 1 state tournament in the Round of 32 on Friday night, Feb. 27, starting at 6 p.m. These teams are so evenly matched, beginning with the

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NEWS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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